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1921





A Plea for Peace

And Other Poems

By Maurice C. Waugh





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AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

MAURICE C. WAUGH



From the Print Shop of
WILL A. SMITH, WHITTIER, CALIFORNIA
1921

PS 3545
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NOV 21 '21

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DEDICATION

To those who know war's dreadful curse,
I dedicate this book of verse;
And from the conference called for peace,
May wars, and rumors thereof, cease.

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A PLEA FOR PEACE

The past decade, so filled with might and greed,
Is but the fruitage of the grown-up seed,
Which all the imps of hell in minds had sown,
So that a false philosophy was known
Whereby some men thought nothing could be right
Except o'ertowered by the power of might.

Through years of struggle, blood, and grief, and pain,
We've seen how futile is this greed for gain;
We've seen the nations which were known for might
Hurled down and trampled under foot o'er night;
We've heard the very universe in doubt
Beseech, "Oh, God, can war be blotted out!"

Once more we face a time when cease it must,
For if we fail in this our sacred trust,
The world will reek and reel with profiteers,
With guns, with ships of war, with death, and tears—
More shame on all the human race, for then
We'll ne'er have "peace on earth, good will to men."

So, God, in this our time of greatest need
Help us forget our color, race, or creed,
And all unite in such a glorious plan
That we may know the brotherhood of man,
With strife, and conquest, war, and bloody gore
Unknown on earth henceforth forever more.

WORSE THAN DEATH

Suppose some day a little boy of mine
Should proudly look into my face and say,
“Now, Dad, you surely got up to the Rhine.
What made the Germans turn and run away?”

Suppose I’d gasp and frown, and hang my head,
And then should have to answer, “No, my lad,
Your Daddie didn’t have to face the lead;
For working in a shipyard was the fad.

“You see your father made almost as much
As eight of those poor simple fighting men,
Of whom you now see many on a crutch,
While others ask us please to lend a ten.

“Then, too, there wasn’t all the danger here
Of raids, and gas, and bullets, bombs or shells;
And in our feather beds we’d never fear
The rats, and mud, or trenches deathly smells.

“If father had been in that awful fight,
He might not be here for his Tootsie Toots
To look up to, and love with all his might,
So some day he can fill his Daddy’s boots.”

Should I in this wise have to make reply,
I’d rather by a million times have died
E’er I beheld the beauteous earth or sky,
Or learned of men whose honor atrophied.

LIFE

In the morning time of life
E'er we learn of sin and strife,
We can dance, and skip, and sing—
Naught we know that fate will bring.

Then our youth begins to dream
Visions, that just make us beam
With a sense of strength and pride,
And there's nothing can betide.

So our manhood comes at last;
Castles shattered strew the past.
Hopes destroyed, and love o'er thrown—
Open, Grave, and claim thine own.

Evening falls upon the stage
And remorse comes on with age.
Had we only done our best,
We'd not fear this going West.

THE IMPOSSIBLE

The woman never has been born
Whose life with mine could be entwined,
For she would surely be forlorn
And lose her mind before she pined.

Suppose for breakfast she served mush
When I have always eaten pie;
Or else, she'd like a coat of plush
So my old coat I'd have to dye.

Then next she'd want a limousine,
In spite of knowing that my purse
Was sparcely filled for gasolene.
Ye gods! to live with a curse.

A summer cottage at the beach
She'd be determined to erect;
But, I could never, never reach
The social stratum she'd select.

Or maybe she'd not care to roam
But rather make a homelike place;
I like the spray of ocean foam—
A change of scene and also face.

The woman never has been born
Whose life with mine could be entwined,
For heartstrings surely would be torn
And more than likely I'd be fined.

WIVES OR OTHERWISE

I've often wondered at the scores of men
Who seem much younger than their sons of ten;
For years rest lightly on Dad's burdened frame,
When son has lassoed him into his game.

I've seen a lady no more young in years
Console her daughter who was grieved with tears,
And really you would have to look again
To see which was the younger of the twain.

Howe'er there's something gives me greater care,
Because I fear to answer back the dare.
At times I see a lady with a man;
The lady's eyes say, "Catch me if you can."

By Jove, she looks so young, and sweet, and spry,
And he so very old, and cold, and wry—
And yet, I cannot tell you for my life
If she's his daughter, or his charming wife.

THE REAL NEED

When I was just "around the town,"
Folks never seemed to care a whit
If I was sick, or well, or down
And out, or even where I lit.

Some day my name may flare and flame
In letters you can read a block,
Then these dear folks, with loud acclaim
Will hail me by the drove and flock.

When men are really out of luck,
And look up to the crest above,
That's when they're in the mire and muck—
They need a pull, and not a shove.

Dame Fortune smiles on many men
In spite of all they have to face,
And you may wager one to ten,
'Twas not from boosts, but just His grace.

AN ODE TO A VERMILLION-HAIRED MILLION-HEIRESS

No, I am not exactly an old batch,
Tho' some young damsel failed to find her match;
For several years ago I turned the page
Into the realm where men are called of age.

I used to think I was a ladies' man,
But now, folks point and say, "He also ran."
Altho' I've gone with girls, a score or more,
Still where I sleep, mine is the only snore.

I've traveled far, in many foreign strands,
I've seen the women of some varied lands;
But now, my feet are tired and need a rest;
I feel that I must face the crucial test.

And so I'm looking for a lady fair,
But she must have a hue and shade of hair
The color men once painted up the town,
Before they learned of Prohibition's frown.

A million shekels, at the very least
Must be her dower at the wedding feast;
So, Lady Fair, with hair of bright vermillion,
Please prove to me that you are worth a million.

PREPAREDNESS

Why hitch your wagon to a single star
When twinklers fill the broad expanse of night?
Some time you may receive a sudden jar,
And your lone star may cease to give its light.

But if you use a half a dozen ropes
With which to lasso several other stars,
Then don't you really see the increased hopes
You have of saving your old carts and cars?

Now take the illustration of a man
Who pays his debts and taxes with a vim,
And also fights for country when he can,
And joins a lodge which may appeal to him.

Old age swoops down upon this mortal's frame
And fate has robbed him of his earthly stores;
Of course, he's learned there's nothing in a name,
So turns to where the poor men do the chores.

A fire has burned the poor house to the ground;
But Uncle Sam will surely treat him right,
For Uncle's judgment never is unsound,
Then to the Soldiers' Home he takes his flight.

They meet him at the door with gracious smiles,
Tho' lists they keep proclaim he was a slacker;
Despite the fact of all these crushing wiles
One place he knows will keep him in "tobakker."

The home for aged which his lodge supplies
Receives him with its portals thrown ajar—
Kind friend who would have furnished him with pies,
If he had hung his wagon on *one* star?

THE GAME OF LOVE

This game of love's a funny thing;
 You think you've found the only girl
And, then you have to buy a ring,
 Thus to secure life's dearest pearl.

So many times men make a choice
 Before they know what they're about,
And later wish she'd lose her voice,
 Or else was slim instead of stout.

But then of course, she too, perhaps
 Might think that fate was most unkind,
Which dealt one of its rattle traps
 For her through life to try to mind.

Perchance our love must be both dumb
 And blind to faults which each possess,
Or we may sit and suck our thumb
 And wish the other would confess.

YOU NEVER KNOW

You never know what you can do
Until you've tried with all your might,
And never quit when you'd like to,
Altho' you seemed to lose the fight.

You never know what "brass" is worth
Unless you've never had a cent,
But still acquired a look of mirth,
And kept right on and made a dent.

You never know the power of prayer
Until you're down and out;
Then answering your plea for care,
The Lord most always makes you stout.

But all that is required of us
Is just to do our level best,
And never fret, or fume, or fuss—
So shall we find our promised rest.

ALL FOR YOU

The power to tell you of my love, dear heart,
Is futile as the feeble hand of man to stay
The flames, which o'er the prairie leap and dart,
Consuming everything along the way.

The power to build the home like sort of nest
Which I would like to ask if you will share,
Is not sufficient to procure the best—
And that for you, is not enough to fare.

The power to reach the highest plane in life
And there to win the battles we must fight,
Gives vim and vigor to our earthly strife,
And keeps us always in the path of right.

The power to will is still our grandest gift
For which I thank an ever watchful hand,
And trust that from my failures I may sift
The gold and fortune of a fairer land.

The power to live as I have long desired
May yet be placed within my humble reach;
Then I shall offer you a heart inspired
To live and learn, as only you can teach.

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

I thought that I could surely get rich quick—

I thought, and now I wonder why I thought,
That all I'd need to turn the little trick

Was just the wild cat stock that I had bought.

The stock went down, and with it my heart sank;

The moon came up, and with it came regret:
Gone were all of my savings from the bank;

Gone also was the girl I'd hoped to get.

Something for nothing never has been true,

Tho' here and there exceptions prove the rule;
So in my memory may I always rue

The times I've acted like a bloomin' mule.

VISIONS

I sit in my room and stare at the wall,
Full well do I know there's nothing in sight,
Yet visions appear from nowhere at all,
Which cause me to smile, or shiver with fright.

The past is all strewn with dead memories;
The future's alive with dreams unfulfilled,
Like leaves which are blown in fall from the trees,
And those that are green which spring has just
thrilled.

I think of the times when luck has been bad,
I long for the time, when into my life
The joys of the day will drown all the sad,
And then, perhaps, I can find a good wife.

CART BEFORE THE HORSE

When we were merely lads in school,
We never used to study much,
Though Joe would study like a fool
We'd laugh about his "mental crutch."

A flower we would classify
Because we knew its given name,
And from the name we would rely
On working backward for our fame.

When we were summoned up in class
To tell the things we could recall,
We never once would fail to pass,
For long ago we'd learned to "stall."

We see the error of our pranks
When years have swiftly come and flown;
For, Joe directs affairs in banks,
While by the winds of chance we're blown.

Like many folks, we tried to cop
Our fortunes and our fame at first,
By starting at the ladder's top—
But, Fate has doomed us to be cursed.

MINE

When you're away
I cannot sing,
Or read, or play,
Or do a thing.

When you are near
My heart strings leap;
My brain acts queer;
I feel so cheap.

This life is short
And death is sure—
Why not report
And seek the cure?

Or else someone
May win your love,
And call you "hun,"
Or "sweet," or "dove."

And then my heart
Would cease to pump,
My thoughts to start,
My nerves to jump.

So, Love Divine,
With heart of gold,
Will you be mine
To have and hold?

GOD OR MAMMON

In a pew at the church where I worshipped today,
I took note of the plate which the ushers passed
'round.

The collection was such that indeed I might say,
That by far the most part merely dimes would be
found.

Then I studied the brethren who sat near at hand,
And I thought of the places each day of the week
They would stuff with their dollars all over the land,
Just to gratify whims and the pleasures they seek.

So the Lord gets our dimes, and the devil our bills;
But the time will approach, and is not far away,
When a voice will proclaim from the mountains and
hills,
That the Lord is nearby and the devil must pay.

TO THE EDITOR

When you have looked this poem thru
And have decided it will "du,"
Please find a place for it in print
Where folks may read and take the hint

But if you think it is too "punk,"
Just throw it in a pile of junk;
Or, better still, for such a fizzle,
Build up the fire and watch it sizzle.

CASH

The filthy lucre we have christened cash
To some of us means room, and shoes, and hash;
To others 'tis a millstone 'round their necks,
For they are cursed with it in bales and pecks.

It's good to have a sum of cash around,
If you should want to buy a little ground;
It's bad to find that you're entirely out
When you are sick, or have a case of gout.

It's hard to get and keep, but not to spend;
Easy to draw and lose, but not to lend.
It's loose when we have Democratic sway,
And tight when things have gone the other way.

To taste its power, men will fight and die;
To clutch and squeeze it, others steal and lie.
The rich disburse it in a steady stream,
While misers grip it till the "eagles scream."

When man has ceased to speak and draw his breath
We say that he has what is known as death;
Till then he cannot live without his cash—
To say what happens after that is rash.

THE CRISIS

When the turning points in life are near
And we pace the floor throughout the night,
Could we only hear a voice so clear
Telling us just how to seek the right.

If our eyes could only see the way
That we ought to follow here below,
Many times we'd chide ourselves and say,
"What weak wills in human skulls do grow."

When at length we're driven to the wall
With our backs thrust up against the stone,
And we're forced to fight, perhaps to fall,
Maybe it is best to strive alone.

But it must be comforting to feel
That your soul mate knows what you must face,
And is ready by your side to kneel,
While you ask for strength and guiding grace.

THEN AND NOW

I should like to have lived when a man was a dub,
Who could not simply go, if he sought for a bride,
With some beads in one hand, in the other a club,
And request that she cook for him all of her life.

I should like to have owned a small castle in Spain
When the knights were still bold in their feudal
array;
Then a stronghold I'd storm with my brave, gallant
train,
And the fairest I'd claim to be known as my own.

But, perhaps it is best that I live when I do,
And never complain about difficult tasks;
For there never was any old timer who knew,
Or who dared even dream of a modern romance.

Oh, it's nothing now, days just to read of a case
Where a couple eloped in a flying machine,
Or, it may be the charge which they're called to face
Was for stealing Dad's Ford when they went to
be tied.

QUALITY OR QUANTITY

There are schools and colleges that boast
Of the thousands which they have enrolled.
What a motto for a striking toast,
“Quantity for quality extolled.”

Many lodges have become machines
That are making members by the score;
But the sad part lies behind the scenes
Where they've lost the spirit as of yore.

So the church, instead of training souls,
Tries to double its old membership;
And the pastor figures out new goals,
While the devil causes men to slip.

In the modern world of business cares
Men just try to see who'll mass the most;
We put premiums on the millionaires,
And all grab from coast to thriving coast.

Emerson was surely in the right
When he asked, “Why live eternally?
For to try with all our mortal might,
One half hour we use infernally.”

Even so, our gold is but a curse,
And our lives are blighted in its wake,
If we take our dollars from our purse
Just to cast them in the sea or lake.

LOVE DREAMS

I never dreamed that I love you
Till after you had gone away;
I wonder now what I would do
If you should go, and always stay.

I never dreamed that you love me;
I never knew you even care,
Or I would ask you just to be—
Pray tell me, Love, how would I fare?

DIVORCE

Oh, Love, that was, but now art flown,
I would that I had never known
The sweetness of that voice divine;
Those tresses brown, and soft, and fine;
The glances which those eyes could dart;
The joy those lips would oft impart;
That mind so keen, so fresh, so wise;
That soul which lived beyond the skies.
I cannot understand the Fate
Which changes Love almost to Hate.

THE WAIL OF A COMMUTER

Upon a crowded bus the other day,
There hopped a husky, wild eyed, country jay.
His hands frisked in and out among his pockets;
His eyes were scarce constrained within their sockets.

When all his useless jerks, and jams, and jabs
Had come to naught but fruitless grabs and stabs,
A light dawned on his frantic, thoughtless face—
His hatband held the object of his chase.

Then followed several miles of jolts and shakes,
Before a lady signalled for the brakes.
She searched, and then researched a silken bag,
Until she found her purse among the swag.

She gazed into her purse for quite a spell,
And poked, and tweaked, and pulled at things as well;
Of course, the driver thought that she was broke,
When lo! she plucked the ticket from her cloak.

Moral.

If in your garb you only keep one place,
Whether in pocket or among some lace,
Where you are sure that you have placed your billet,
Then you can find it any time you will-it.

JAZZ

Some people like the “jazz” so much
That all their records wail and screech,
And all their friends are only such
As “shimmy” in their acts and speech.

The music which they always buy
Just reels and reeks in snappy strains,
And all their songs so rend the sky,
That all the neighbors groan with pains.

Likewise, the dances which they know
Are wicked, weavy, wily shakes,
And glides so creepy and so slow
That they compare with snails and snakes.

The very atmosphere is steeped
And saturated with this slime;
We know that what we sow is reaped,
And many times we’re sowing crime.

FREEDOM—TO DO AS WE OUGHT

Most all of us can sing a bar or two

And also whistle, when we're feeling fine,
And talk a streak about the things we do,
Or eat our food as noisily as swine.

But when I go to hear a band perform,

I want to hear the music that they play,
And not a hoarse voice, sadly out of form
Proclaiming some one in the crowd's a jay.

So, likewise, when a drama comes to town,

And I have paid good money for a seat,
I don't go just to hear some would-be clown
Behind me, tell his girl she's "hard to beat."

Sometimes I try to concentrate my mind

On weighty problems of the present age,
When someone, who has never learned to mind
His business, butts in whistling—to my rage.

When I go in a restaurant to eat,

"The orchestra is fine," I like to say,
But how can any man enjoy this treat
If someone's yodling soup across the way.

Of course, we're living in a land of free
And brave, and equal men, and women, too;
But may we ever clearly try to see
That what "I" do also pertains to "You."

FUMBLING

Fumbling, always fumbling
O'er the words I speak to you;
Jumbling, always jumbling
Everything I try to do.

Mumbling, ever mumbling—
What I say is all so trite;
Stumbling, ever stumbling—
So I'm forced at length to write.

Rumbling, my head's rumbling
Till my thoughts are in a mess
Crumbling, my heart's crumpling
When you seem to love me less.

Grumbling, how I'm grumbling
'Cause the world is upside down;
Tumbling, yes I'm tumbling
To the fact I'm but a clown.

SOMETIME

Sometime I shall build a house;
Sometime I shall find a spouse;
Sometime I shall write a book;
Sometime cease to be a crook.

Sometime birds will sweetly sing;
Sometime Life will lose it's sting;
Sometime skies will all be bright;
Sometime dark will turn to light.

Sometime—it is always sometime
That the bells are going to chime;
Shall we never reach the “time some”
Of these things may yet become?

JUST YOU

There's a time in our lives when the spirit to roam
Is suppressed by a motive far deeper and sound;
For our lighter desires are so much like the foam,
While our purer emotions are firm as the ground.

Nearly all of us see more or less of the world,
Then we tire of the fickleness, pomp and display,
And we long for a cabin, or cottage, where curled
In a chair, we can listen as wife talks away.

At some time we may wish to go back to the place
Where we hunted, or fought, or our learning im-
bibed;
But how nice, with our better half scanning our face,
It will be to relate what our memory inscribed.

Surely joy will be many fold greater with you
To explore all the beauties of nature and art,
Than to selfishly gobble up all of the view,
And to leave you with hopes unattained in your
heart.

DEPARTED

In the gloom we often grope
Till the darkness sort o' clears.
From the murk in which we mope
Many times we lose our fears.

Even sorrows we have known
That have seemed to deep for tears,
Have all passed, and have been blown
Like the wind which disappears.

With our joys this is not true,
For we look back o'er the years,
And recall a jolly "rue"
Where they served light wines and beers.

HARD LUCK

It seems hard luck is always mine;
 My eyes are in a horrid fix,
My teeth are bad, my feet are flat,
 My lungs are weak, my hair is—nix.

My salary is'nt very much;
 I have no decent place to eat,
And rooms cost what a house is worth,
 While all my trousers need a seat.

I walked along the street today
 And saw a fellow on the walk
Whose legs were gone, whose back was bent,
 And who could neither hear nor talk.

I know a man who's out of work,
 And yet his wife and babes must live;
So all their pride is crushed and seared,
 For they must take what folks will give.

If what ails me is called hard luck,
 Then new words should be coined to fit
The case of those who drink life's dregs,
 And seem so near the fiery pit.

I KIND O' LIKE YOU SO

When the world is out of joint
And most everything goes wrong,
Come to me and let me point
Out the way to joy and song—
Because I kind o' like you so.

Health all gone and temper riled?
Mortgaged all that you possess?
Lost your friend, or wife, or child?
I may help you ne'er the less—
Because I kind o' like you so.

Tho' it seems no hope is left
And perdition's not so bad,
You are surely not bereft,
While I'm here to make you glad—
Because I kind o' like you so.

So cheer up and smile a grin;
Night is darkest—then the dawn
Bursts upon this world of sin,
And our fears are all withdrawn—
Because He kind o' likes us so.

WHY?

Why do we tire of the things that we see

Each day of our lives as we pass on our way?

Why do we long for the great "out beyond"

Which hems in our little horizon we say?

Why do we plan for a future so grand,

And know all the while 'twill hold grief and
dismay?

Why does our heart cease to vibrate with joy

When shadows of sorrow have darkened our mind?

Why does a habit creep into our life

And get such a hold that it will not unwind?

Why are the riches and good things of earth

Withheld till we're toothless, and crabbed, and
blind?

When we were children we liked to ask why

The night had to come and spoil all of our play.

Now that experience has widened our view,

We know that the night has to follow the day,
Still we are mortal and foolishly ask

About many things we don't know, but we may.

LONELINESS

I've stood alone on desert sands;
I've hiked alone mid rocky peaks,
And prairie slopes, and timber lands;
Alone I've sat on great ship's beaks
And watched the seething briny deep:
But loneliness ne'er grips my heart
Till down a street I slowly creep,
And of the crowds know none apart.

THE ORGAN

The music of an organ seems
To grip me with a magic spell,
While pouring forth its very soul
I almost think that all is well.

I lose the sense of time and space
While rapture thrills me through and through;
I wish the past were all erased
And I might live my life anew.

Sometimes the tones are soft and sweet,
And then the pipes all seem to wail
In plaintive notes of solemn woe,
Just as in life we win or fail.

Oft times again in ecstacy
I'm swept beyond this little stage,
And feel the freedom of the skies,
Much as a bird which flees its cage.

But, suddenly the music stops,—
The earth extends a void expanse
And waits me with its cruel cares,
As I awaken from my trance.

DEATH

Death is but a parting of the clay
From the soul which onward speeds its way;
Just a changing of our mortal shrouds,
For the robes of white beyond the clouds:
Life is sweet with all its toils and cares,
But this place we ask for in our prayers
Must be sweeter, fairer, lovelier than
Anything that's been revealed to man.

PRAYER

How often we think prayer is just
For use in time of direst needs.
Along with joys we rest our trust,
And let our souls grow up in weeds.

At other times we think that God
Should give the things we ask of him,
But never will his ways be trod
Again, unless he grants our whim.

When days are bright and roads are smooth
We never think to offer thanks;
When storms have crashed, our fears we soothe
By posing as religious cranks.

We're like the boy up on the roof
Who slipped, and with a smothered gulp
Exclaimed, "Oh, Lord, please give me proof
That I will not be crushed to pulp."

A nail projecting in his path
Was just the means that God had wrought,
And yet this boy cried out in wrath
"Ne'er mind, dear Lord, for I have caught."

But in all seriousness now
Our prayers should always meet the test,
Not of the "Father I will Thou,"
But, "As Thou wilt" for us is best.

THE GREATEST THING IN LIFE

I think the greatest thing in life
Would be to have a faithful wife,
Who hankers not for bridge and punch
But can concoct a tempting lunch.

One who does not forever gad,
Nor fall for each new fangled fad;
Who plays and sings—yet likes to cook,
And loves me just like in a book.

I never owned a faithful bride
Perchance because of my false pride.
My gaze is 'way up in the sky;
My eyes can't see the common fry.

Some day a little blue eyed dame
May have a chance to change her name;
Perhaps she'll say, "It is not best
For me to live with such a pest."

FINIS

My days have been so full of joy,
And sorrow too, and love, and strife,—
And yet, I'm only just a boy
In spite of concentrated life.

I've played the game from start to end,
And may folks say when I depart,
“His flesh and bones with earth shall blend,
But we shall always have his heart.”

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